



Special Transit's Training Program

The safe operation of vehicles and the safe transportation of passengers are Special Transit's highest priorities. Our passengers depend on the knowledge, judgment, and skills of the drivers for their safety and welfare. A training program that prepares drivers for these weighty responsibilities must go beyond the initial "new-hire" training and continue to offer opportunities for drivers to practice their skills and rid themselves of bad habits that may develop. In this sense, training never ends. The Training Program at Special Transit has two major components: New-Hire Training and Continuing Education.

New-Hire Training

New drivers at Special Transit receive 120 hours of training over a three-week period. The first two weeks introduce the trainees to all of the elements of their jobs. This makes use of classroom time to cover such subjects as:

company orientation	mapping & navigation
safety policies and procedures	sensitivity training
defensive driving	drug and alcohol awareness
radio communications	manifests & paperwork

The practice parking lot and selected roadways are used to get hands-on experience with:

pre-trip vehicle inspections	passenger safety and service
vehicle maneuvers	wheelchair management
CDL preparation	emergency evacuation

Once the trainees have mastered the basic training components above, they are placed in situations where they can practice their multi-tasking skills. Mock routes are designed to have difficult pick-up locations and the trainees are asked to navigate these using their own mapping instructions. Fellow trainees are asked to be passengers riding in wheelchairs, both for their own knowledge of what it's like, but for the driver's experience of loading and securing the wheelchair. As the first two weeks come to an end, over 90% of the trainees are ready to go into route training.

The final week of new-hire training is spent driving in revenue service under the supervision of a senior driver. All of the various tasks are performed in the actual working environment with coaching as needed from a veteran. The trainee's skills are evaluated on the final day, and if judged satisfactory, he moves into active service as the newest member of the driving staff.

While the primary goal of new-hire training is to provide the drivers with the competence and confidence to perform their duties in a safe accident-free manner, continuing education is designed to keep their knowledge up to date and their skills polished. Skills that are not used regularly fade; skills

that are used often tend to slide away from safety in favor of convenience. Continuing education attempts to counteract these changes.

That is why there is a continuing education component in Special Transit's annual re-certification requirements. In addition to keeping licenses and D.O.T. cards current, all drivers are required to earn a minimum of 12 continuing education (C.E.) credits annually. At least 6 of these credits must be earned in defensive driving courses, 4 must be in the area of passenger safety and service, and the remaining two credits can be electives.